

Message Text

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42

ACTION SS-25

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O R 061030Z NOV 75
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4625
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 2288

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR FOR POLADS

E.GM 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, SS, MR, MO, SP, AG, UN
SUBJ: SYARA WATCH: MAURITANIA REQUESTS U.S. PRESS SPAIN TO REACH
SAHARA TRANSFER AGREEMENT WITH MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 2179

1. SUMMARY: MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS HAMDY OULD MOUKNASS CALLED ME IN LATE AFTERNOON
NOVEMBER 5 TO OUTLINE MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT'S (GIRM)
VIEW OF CURRENT STATE OF SAHARA PLAY, AND TO REQUEST US
TO PRESS SPAIN TO NEGOTIATE EXPEDITIOUS TRANSFER OF
WESTERN SAHARA TO MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO. MOUKNASS ASSERTED
THERE COULD AND WOULD BE NO RESOLUTION OF SAHARA DISPUTE
WHICH WAS NOT FOUNDED ON COMPLETE AGREEMENT AMONG SPAIN,
MAURITANIA, AND MOROCCO, HOWEVER THIS BASIC BUILDING
BLOC MIGHT SUBSEQUENTLY BE DRESSED UP FOR UN AND IN-
TERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CONSUMPTION. GIRM IS PREPARED
TO ACCEPT A BRIEF AND FOR-APPEARANCES-ONLY UN ROLE
IN SAHARA DECOLONIZATION, BUT CLEARLY ONLY AS DIS-
TINCT SECOND CHOICE. MOUKNASS DECLARED GIRM WAS
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"SHOCKED" BY ALGERIA'S DECISION TO BECOME "POLICEMAN"

OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY". AFTER REITERATING US POSITION OF STRICT NEUTRALITY AND OUR INTEREST IN PEACEFUL SOLUTION, AND NOTING WE HAD INTERVENED IN SAHARA PROBLEM ONLY TO URGE RESTRAINT AND CAREFUL REFLECTION ON VARIOUS PLAYERS, I TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER I DOUBTED USG WOULD RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO GIRM REQUEST FOR DIRECT US INVOLVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER MOUKNASS OPENED INTERVIEW WITH QUICK REVIEW OF PAST WEEK'S EVENTS: AT SPANISH INITIATIVE, MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTERS HAD ASSEMBLED IN MADRID TO NEGOTIATE TRANSFER OF WESTERN SAHARA. REPRESENTATIVES OF THREE COUNTRIES HAD REACHED "COMPLETE AGREEMENT" ON BASIS ("FOND") FOR TURNOVER, AND DRAFTED THREE SEPARATE ACCORDS: FIRST TRANSFERRING SOVEREIGNTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY FROM SPAIN TO MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO; SECOND, A PAIR OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS: SPAIN-MAURITANIA AND SPAIN-MOROCCO; AND THIRD, A MILITARY ACCORD PROVIDING FOR GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL OF SPANISH MILITARY FORCES AND THEIR CONCOMMITANT REPLACEMENT BY MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN MILITARY AND SECURITY UNITS. AGREEMENTS WERE AD REFERENDUM (ALTHOUGH MOUKNASS AND LARAKI HAD FULL POWERS, SPANISH NEGOTIATOR DIDNOT), AND NEGOTIATIONS WERE "SUSPENDED" TO PERMIT REPRESENTATIVES TO REPORT TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS AND TO OBTAIN AUTHORITY TO PROCEED. SCHEDULED RESUMPTION OF TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE ON NUMBER THREE OR FOUR WAS INTERRUPTED BY "EVENTS IN SPAIN ABOUT WHICH YOU ARE UP TO DATE".

3. TURNING TO SUBSTANCE, MOUKNASS ASSERTED THAT THERE CAN AND WILL BE NO RESOLUTION OF SAHARA PROBLEM WHICH IS NOT BASED ON COMPLETE, FORMAL AGREEMENT AMONG SPAIN, MAURITANIA, AND MOROCCO. AGREEMENT AMONG ANY TWO--AND SPECIFICALLY BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO WITHOUT MAURITANIA--SIMPLY WILL NOT RPT NOT WORK. BUT ONCE THREE NATIONS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PROBLEM REACH AGREEMENT ON BASIS FOR RESOLUTION, TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT CAN BE DRESSED UP IN VARIETY OF WAYS WHICH INVOLVE VARIETY OF PARTICIPATING ACTORS. MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO WILL AGREE ON ANY

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FORM OR PRESENTATION ("HABILLAGE") WHICH OTHER (PRESUMABLY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY) DESIRE ONCE BASIS IS AGREED UPON AMONG THE THREE.

4. MOUKNASS THEN ASSERTED THAT NEITHER MAURITANIA NOR MOROCCO WANT A "SOCIALIST STATE" IN BETWEEN THEM HAVING COMMON FRONTIERS WITH THEM BOTH, PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS STATE WOULD BE SMALL, WEAK, AND MANIPULATED IF

NOT DOMINATED BY ALGERIA.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER THEN DECLARED THAT US AS GREAT POWER AND AS NATION WITH OBVIOUS INTERESTS IN NORTHWEST CORNER OF AFRICA AND SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH SEVERAL OF STATES IN THE GENERAL REGION "HAD RESPONSIBILITY" TO BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN SEARCH FOR "THE MOST EQUITABLE SOLUTION". HE CALLED UPON US TO FULLFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITY, AND SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED USG (A) TO PRESS SPAIN TO REACH REQUIRED SAHARA TURNOVER AGREEMENT WITH MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO, AND THEN (B) TO PRESS ALL THREE TO AGREE ON OUTWARD FORM BASIC ACCORD WHICH WILL GAIN WIDEST ACCEPTANCE IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 061630Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4626

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBJDSY RABAT

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6. MOUKNASS THEN NOTED THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTED GIRM AMBASSADOR OVLDTABDALLAH TO MAKE PARALLEL APPROACH TO DEPARTMENT IN CONCERT WITH HIS MOROCCAN COLLEAGUE.

7. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY ABOUT POSSIBLE UN ROLE, MOUKNASS WAS NOTABLY UNENTHUSIASTIC, WHILE NOTING THAT GIRM MHLDS UN IN HIGH ESTEEM AND STRONGLY BELIEVES UN

IS ESSENTIAL FOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY WELL BEING OF SMALL AND MINI IATES. HE DECLARED GIRM COULD ENVISAGE TWO SORTS OF UN INVOLVEMENT: GENERAL ASSEMBLY COULD BE CALLED UPON TO RATIFY DECOLONIZATION AGREEMENT WORKED OUT BY THREE STATES DIRECTLY INVOLVED; AND AS DISTINCT SEXBMZ#CHOICE, UN MIGHT DESIGNATE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO WORK WITH MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN/SPANISH ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION SET UP TO IMPLEMENT TRANSFER AND GOVERN SAHARA FOR SIX MONTHS AND TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR A "CONSULTATION" OF SAHARA POPULATION. ALTHOUGH MOUKNASS DID NOT SPELL OUT WHATHE MEANT BY "CONSULTATION", IT WAS CLEAR HE WAS STILL THINKING IN TERMS HE HAA OUTLINED TO ME EARLIER: SAHARANS WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO STATE WHETHER THEY WANTED TO BE MAURITANIANS OR MOROCCANS. WHEN I OBSERVED THAT SECOND FORMULA APPEARED TO BE AT LEAST PARTIALLY RESPONSIVE TO WIDESPREAD
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INSISTENCE ON SELF-DETERMINATION EVEN THOUGH ACTUAL PULSE-TAKING HAD BEEN AMENDED TO MAKE IT MORE RESTRICTED THAN IN USUAL CASE, MOUKNASS SMILED HIS AGREEMENT AND OBSERVED THAT ENVISAGED FORM OF REFERENDUM WAS AN "IMPROVED VERSION".OFSSQVHWT#ONE POINT IN HIS EXPOSITION MOUKNASS DECLARED
GIRM HAD BEEN "SHOCKED" BY DECISION OF ALGERIA TO BECOME "POLICEMAN OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY". HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT MAURITANIA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS ALGERIAN BROTHERS CONTINUE TO BE GOOD. (WITH CLEAR INTENTION OF UNDERSCORING THIS POINT, MOUKNASS INSTALLED HIMSELF IN PROMINENT POSITION AT ALGERIAN ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION LAST NIGHT, AND GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED NEWSPAPER THIS MORNING MADE SPECIAL MENTION OF HIS APPEARANCE AT ALGERIAN EMBASSY.)

9. IN RESPONSE TO FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESENTATION, I REITERATED THAT US POSITION WAS ONE OF STRICT NEUTRALITY AND THAT OUR ONLY INTEREST WAS THAT THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. I STATED WE HAD GONE BEYOND THIS CADULCT CIRCUMSCRIBED ROLE ONLY TO URGE RESTRAINT ON VARIOUS PLAYERS. AFTER ASSURING MINISTER I WOULD PROMPTLY REPORT BOTH HIS PRESENTATION AND HIS REQUEST FOR US INVOLVEMENT TO WASHINGTON, I STATED THAT I VERY MUCH DOUBTED THAT US WOULD RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO GIRM REQUEST FOR US ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN SUBSTANCE OF DISPUTE. I DID NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT I WAS CONFIDENT US WOULD DO WHATEVER IT COULD TO BE HELPFUL TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

10. AT NO TIME DURING OUR DISCUSSION DID MOUKNASS

MENTION OR IMPLY AWARENESS OF SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S
SECOND SAHARA ABOUT FACE. BUT CONTEXT OF MAURITANIAN
TWIN APPROACHES TO USG AND MINISTER'S EXPLICIT CRI-
TICISM OF ALGERIA MAKE IT CLEAR THAT MAURITANIANS ARE
FULLY AWARE OF GOS POLICY SHIFT AND ROLE BOUMEDIENNE
PLAYED IN IT, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY NOT HAVE DETAILED
KNOWLEDGE OF SPANISH GOVERNMENT INFIGHTING. FROM THIS
VANTAGE POINT, GIRM REQUEST WOULD APPEAR TO BE CALCULATED
EFFORT TO CREATE COUNTER PRESSURE ON CZOKTPINRFSET #
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ALGERIAN THREAT AND THEREBY MOVE SPANISH BACK TO
POSITION THEY OCCUPIED MIDDLE OF LAST WEEK.

11. AT CONCLUSION OF OUR DISCUSSION, MOUKNASS EX-
PLICITLY NOTED ONCE AGAIN THAT MAURITANIA IS BY FAR
THE WEAKEST OF THE SAHARA PLAYERS, BUT DECLARED
THAT THE GIRM IS QUIETLY ALMOST SERENELY CONFIDENT
THAT ITS REASONABLE AND LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS WILL
ULTIMATELY BE FULFILLED. HANDYSIDE

NOTE BY OC/T: SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 2288; #PARAS. 7. AND 10.
AS RECEIVED. CORRECTIONS TO FOLLOW.

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